

**EAST STOW  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

OF THE

**Medical Officer of Health,**

**1919.**

**STOWMARKET:**

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To the  
Chairman and Members  
of the  
East Stow Rural District Council.

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STOWMARKET,

*March, 1920.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report on the health of the East Stow Rural District for the year ending December 31st, 1919.

**NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS  
OF THE DISTRICT.**

**Population.**—(Census 1911) 6223. (Estimated 1919) 6213.

**Physical Features and General Character of District.**—Inland—generally flat—watered by river Gipping, and a few small tributaries—soil of a mixed character, mostly fertile and well cultivated, with some small woods and a few small pits of chalk, gravel, flint, and brick earth. -

**Social Conditions.**—The occupation of the inhabitants is mainly agricultural, except in the parishes immediately adjoining the town of Stowmarket, which contain a Cordite and Collodion Factory, Chemical Manure Works, Saw Mills, Flour Mills, Brewers' Chemicals Factory, Maltings, Tannery, &c. There are few large estates, the district being mainly divided into small farms, few exceeding 300 acres.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**

Birth Rate 18·99 per 1000.

**Birth Rate.**—There were 118 births in 1919 (males 62, females 56), giving a Birth Rate of 18·99 per 1000 in 1919, compared with 19·54 in 1918, 18·08 in 1917, 19·7 in 1916, and 20·4 in 1915. The Birth Rate for England and Wales was 18·5 in 1919.

There were 7 illegitimate births.



Death Rate 17·27 per 1000.

**Death Rate.**—There were 103 deaths (males 50, females 53), giving a Death Rate of 17·27 per 1000 for 1919, compared with 16·29 in 1918, 14·36 in 1917, 12·3 in 1916, and 13·7 in 1915. The Death Rate for England and Wales was 13·8 in 1919.

Infant Mortality 127·11 per 1000.

**Infant Mortality.**—There were 15 deaths of infants under one year of age, giving an Infant Mortality of 127·11 per 1000 nett births in 1919, compared with 79·80 in 1918, 91·59 in 1917, 67·00 in 1916, and 92·00 in 1915. The Rate for England and Wales was 89·0 in 1919. Of these 15 deaths of Infants, 7 were registered as "Premature Birth" (6 being twins), 3 as "Debility from Birth," and 2 "Malformations," thus 12 out of 15 being due to Ante-Natal causes.

**Other Deaths.**—There was 1 death from Diphtheria, 1 Influenza, 5 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and 12 from Cancer.

The Vital Statistics have been based on a population of 6213 for calculating the Birth Rate, and of 5964 for calculating the Death Rate, as given by the Registrar General for the year 1919.

**Poor Law Relief**—The number of paupers and scale of relief accord with the average of the country.

**Hospitals, &c.**—There is no general hospital in the district, but serious cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the County Hospital at Ipswich. Other forms of gratuitous medical relief are utilised to a small extent.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

**Water.**—The domestic water supply of the district is derived mainly from wells (mostly shallow) and ponds, liable to pollution. A part of the parish of Stowupland is supplied by mains from the Stowmarket Waterworks, and separate Waterworks constructed by the Council for this parish are now nearing completion, and will supply a considerable portion of the parish. The waterworks at Combs, belonging to the Council, supply 97 houses in the lower portion of this parish.

**Rivers and Streams.**—The river Gipping and other small streams are liable to pollution. They are becoming largely choked with silt and vegetation. The street drains at Haughley discharge into an open ditch, and the effluent eventually finds its way into the Gipping.

**Drainage and Sewerage.**—There are public sewers in the lower portions of the parishes of Stowupland and Combs, in Stowupland a total length of 4450 feet, with which 161 dwellings are connected, and in Combs a total length of 1300 feet, with 96 dwellings connected. The sewage is pumped up to the Joint Sewerage Farm of the East Stow Rural and Stowmarket Urban Districts, through an 11-inch. main. The cottages in the rest of the district are generally without drainage. The conditions are not scientific, but the scattered and open character of the district generally prevent any serious nuisances and make any general scheme of sewerage or sewage disposal impossible.

**Closet Accommodation.**—Outside the sewered areas chiefly pail closets and privy-middens, two-thirds of the former and one-third of the latter type. Orders are given for the conversion of privies into pail closets on occurrence of nuisances caused thereby, and for provision of additional accommodation where necessary. Approximate number of pail closets, 809; privies, 404.

**Scavenging.**—The only collection of house refuse is made in the lower portion of Stowupland.

**Sanitary Inspection of District.**—

- (a) Number of Inspections—47
- (b) Number of Notices served—15
- (c) All the Notices were complied with.

Cowsheds—22, all inspected and found satisfactory, except 1 at Bell's Farm, Haughley, which was in a dirty condition, and order served to be rectified, this was carried out.

Factories and Workshops—23, inspected and found satisfactory.

Slaughter-houses—2, inspected and found satisfactory.

Schools—Sanitation satisfactory, except at Old Newton. In the latter case legal proceedings were instituted and action is now being taken to comply with Justices' order.

**Nature of Inspections.**—Nuisances caused by accumulations of manure, &c., animal nuisances, ditches used as drains, foul closets, defective privies, defective drains, dirty premises, overcrowding, structural defects of dwellings such as unrepaired roofs, damp walls and floors, absence of eaves, gutters, &c.

**Premises and Occupations controllable by regulations.**—There are no byelaws in force in the district except in respect of dairies and cowsheds. These, together with slaughter-houses, are frequently inspected and kept in good order.



**Schools.**—(See particulars above). Owing to the comparative freedom of the district from Infectious Disease no special action has been necessary for preventing the spread of such disease with regard to the schools.

## **FOOD.**

**Milk Supply.**—The district is supplied by local producers, who also export a considerable quantity. The County Police take samples for examination. The supply as a whole is abundant and wholesome.

**Milk (Mother's and Children) Order, 1918.**—No action has been found necessary under this order.

**Other Foods.**—There is no public abattoir in the district. Bakehouses have been inspected and found satisfactory.

## **PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.**

**Infectious Diseases generally.**—The following cases were notified during the year:—Measles 20 (5 German Measles); Diphtheria 7 (6 removed to Isolation Hospital); Scarlet Fever 3 (all removed to Isolation Hospital); Erysipelas 5; Malaria 2 (discharged soldiers); Pneumonia 8; Dysentery 1 (discharged soldier); Puerperal Fever 1; Ophthalmia Neonatorum 1; Tuberculosis 10 (7 Lungs).

All 3 cases of Scarlet Fever were removed to the Isolation Hospital, 2 occurred in the same house. 6 out of the 7 cases of Diphtheria were removed to the Isolation Hospital. Antitoxin is supplied free for all cases of Diphtheria if necessary.

There was a marked absence of Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria and even Follicular Tonsilitis during the Influenza epidemic in February, March and April, as also in the Influenza epidemic in October and November, 1918.

**Small Pox.**—No primary vaccinations or re-vaccinations have been performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations.

## **INFLUENZA.**

An epidemic recurred towards the end of February, reaching its height in March and quickly subsiding. This was not so severe as in many districts, and only 1 death occurred (a female aged 67 years).

Pamphlets on Influenza had already been issued from house to house in November, 1918; and home nursing had been arranged for as far as was possible in such a scattered district.

## **MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.**

An Infant Welfare Centre was opened in Stowmarket on January 24th, 1919. This is intended to serve the Stowmarket Urban District and the East Stow Rural District, but in reality only a few mothers and infants from the parishes adjacent to Stowmarket are able to attend from the East Stow District, though Miss Coulton, who has been appointed by the County Council as Health Visitor in charge of the Centre, visits mothers and infants in the whole district. This, our first year, has been most successful and encouraging.

45 Meetings were held during the year.

Average attendance at meetings, Mothers 15.

Children 17.

126 names on the register at end of year.

8 members have left the district.

25 names removed from register owing to non-attendance.

The total of non-attending mothers is 19.

There has been no death.

It will be seen from the Vital Statistics that there have been 15 deaths amongst infants under one year of age, but most of these were due to Ante-natal causes, while in the same period there was only one death in the Stowmarket Urban District. This shows a need for an Ante-natal Clinic and for getting in touch with the outlying parishes of East Stow.

The Committee of the Infant Welfare Centre have approved of a scheme prepared by Miss Coulton for extending the Infant Welfare Work, comprising chiefly :—A Maternity Ward of 2 beds and 2 cots. A Ward for ailing infants (2 cots). A Nursery School, the training of home-helps and a Dental Clinic.

This scheme has been forwarded to the County Council, who are not yet prepared to sanction the necessary expenditure for an object so extremely beneficial to human society.

## **DISTRICT NURSES.**

The whole district is badly in need of District Nurses and Trained Midwives.



## ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

Stowmarket Isolation Hospital serves three districts:—i.e. Stowmarket Urban, East Stow Rural, and Thedwastre Rural, under a joint agreement.

Total number of beds—24, contained in 4 wards.

Total cases admitted during year—22.

**From Stowmarket Urban District:**—Diphtheria 9, Scarlet Fever 1, Enteric Fever 1, and Influenzal-Pneumonia 2.

One Death from Influenzal-Pneumonia.

**From East Stow Rural District.**—Diphtheria 6 and Scarlet Fever 3.

One Death from Diphtheria.

**From Thedwastre Rural District.**—Nil.

Two Deaths have taken place in the Isolation Hospital this year, and I would like to remind the 3 Councils concerned that we are still without a Mortuary; the difficulty arising from this fact can easily be imagined.

There is no bathroom, either for patients or staff.

There is no provision for artificial light, except by means of oil lamps.

There is a thoroughly up-to-date steam disinfecting plant.

The Hospital is well managed by a fully-qualified Matron who has a probationer to assist.

## HOUSING.

**General Housing Conditions in the District.**—

(1) Number of houses—1470.

Number of working class dwellings—1314.

New houses for working classes erected during the year, or in course of erection—none.

(2) Population (Estimated for 1919)—6213. No important changes have taken place during the year; but the re-organisation of the Cordite and Collodion Factory, which have been almost inactive during the past 2 years, may affect the future population of the district.

(3) (a) Extent of shortage—It is estimated that 260 houses are needed to meet existing shortage and abate overcrowding.



- (b) Measures taken or contemplated to meet shortage—The Council have prepared plans for 260 new houses, and it is hoped that during the summer of 1920, building will be begun in several parishes.

### Overcrowding :—

- (1) Extent—30 Cottages.
- (2) Causes—Insufficiency of dwellings especially for larger families.
- (3) Measures to deal with overcrowding—The only measure practicable under existing conditions is the provision of new houses with 3 bedrooms. These the Council, as mentioned above, propose to erect. It is impossible at present to abate overcrowding in the majority of cases.
- (4) Principal cases of overcrowding :—Some orders have been served for abatement, but these remain in-operative under existing conditions.

### Fitness of Houses.—

- (1) (a) General standard of housing in district—low.  
(b) General character of defects in unfit houses—excessive dampness of walls and floors, insufficient height of bedrooms, want of ventilation, and reparation.
- (2) Action taken under—  
(a) Public Health Acts—Nil.  
(b) Housing Acts—under Section 17.
- (3) Difficulties in remedying unfitness—Many cottages belong to poor persons who are unable to meet high cost of repairs, local tradesmen have more orders than they are able to execute, and necessary alterations in many cases cannot be executed without displacement of tenants, who cannot at present obtain other accommodation.

### Statistics for 1919.—

- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which complaints were made that they are unfit for human habitation.  
(a) By Householders—Nil.  
(b) By Parish Councils—Nil.

- (2) Action under Section 17 of the Housing Act of 1909.
  - (a) Number of dwelling houses inspected under and for the purpose of the section—128.
  - (b) Number considered unfit for human habitation—5.
  - (c) Number defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders—2.
- (3) Action under Section 28 of Housing Act, 1919.
  - (a) Number of orders for repairs issued—35.
  - (b) Number in which repairs carried out by local authority—Nil.
  - (c) Number of dwelling houses voluntarily closed on notice by owner that they could not be made fit without reconstruction—1.
- (4) Closing orders—
  - (a) Number of representations made to local authority with a view to making of closing orders—Nil.
  - (b) Number of closing orders made—Nil.
  - (c) Number of dwelling houses under closing orders made fit for human habitation—2.
- (5) Demolition orders—Nil.
- (6) Number of dwelling houses demolished voluntarily—Nil.
- (7) Obstructive buildings—Nil.
- (8) Staff engaged in housing work—Medical Officer of Health and Housing Inspector.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for the consideration they have shown me, and the Sanitary Inspector for the information he has given me in connection with his work during the year.

Yours faithfully,

**S. C. HOUNSFIELD,**

*Medical Officer of Health.*